

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON X, FIRST QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, MARCH 11.

Text of the Lesson, Mark II, 1-12. Memory Verses, 9-12—Golden Text, Mark II, 10—Commentary Prepared by the Rev. D. M. Stearns.

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1. "And again He entered into Capernaum after some days." According to some harmonies Mark I, 39, describes His first general circuit of Galilee, which Math. iv, 23, states more fully in these words, "And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Between verses 39 and 40 of chapter I these harmonies tell us that there comes in the sermon on the mount and the draft of fishes of Luke v, 1-11, then the healing of the leper of Mark I, 40-45, after which Mark tells us that because of the healed leper's blazing the matter abroad Jesus could not enter the city, but was without in desert places. Luke says that He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed (Luke v, 16). Our lesson begins with His return to Capernaum and its being noised that He was in the house.

2. "He preached the word unto them." A house full of people and crowds at the door, and He preached the gospel of the kingdom as He had done all through Galilee. He had but one great topic, the good news of the grace and the glory of God, revealing the Father's purposes and telling of the Father's great gift, even Himself, in whom all the grace and glory were made sure to each one receiving Him, and they might have remembered that it was written, "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Ps. lxxxiv, 11). The command still holds, "Preach the word" (II Tim. iv, 2).

3, 4. Four men come carrying on a bed a fifth who was sick with palsy. We are not told what distance they came, but they came with a determination that Jesus should see their sick friend and heal him. They had no thought of carrying him home again, for they fully expected to see him walk home. What their thoughts were when they saw that the house was full and that they could not even get near the door may perhaps be imagined, but perhaps not, for they were men of great determination. Many would have been utterly discouraged, but not so they. Soon they are on the roof and have broken it up and have lowered the sick man on his couch into the midst before Jesus (Luke v, 19). In Luke iv, 37, it is written that Pharisees and doctors of the law were present from Judaea and Galilee, and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. They did not know that they needed healing, they did not come to be healed, but God had planned that they should see something of His power to heal.

5. "Jesus saw their faith." The faith of these four interested and pleased Him. That the sick man had faith also we are not told. In Math. viii, 10, it was the faith of the centurion that brought health to his servant. In Math. xv, 28, it was the faith of the woman that brought health to her daughter. It was the faith of Rahab that saved her kindred. Consider what you may bring to others by faith in God. Faith is just believing what God says, taking Him at His word, fully persuaded that He will do what He says.

6, 7. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Thus these self righteous scribes reasoned in their hearts, not knowing that the God who forgives sins was really in their midst, the same one concerning whom the nation will one day say: "Lo, this is our God! We have waited for Him, and He will save us" (Isa. xxv, 9). The only one who could forgive their sins and without whom their sins never could be forgiven, yet they knew Him not. It is not by reasoning that we obtain the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, but by receiving Him, putting our whole trust in His precious blood shed for us, then we can appropriate Eph. i, 6, 7, and Isa. xliii, 25.

8. "Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves." He knows all our thoughts and our words before they are spoken (Ezek. xi, 5; Ps. cxxxix, 4). We can hide nothing from Him, and the darkness and the light are all alike to Him. It must have been a surprise to them to experience such extraordinary mind reading. What a wonder that they did not perceive that God was in their midst! Why did they not say: Here is one who reads our very thoughts and who forgives sins. This must be our Messiah.

9. "Whether it is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise and take up thy bed and walk?' A physician might possibly be used of God to give health to this man's body, but no mortal man could blot out his sins. The more difficult, the forgiveness of sins had been accomplished in their presence and in their hearing, and He who did the more difficult could easily do the other. He who forgives sins will surely give a perfect body to all His forgiven ones in due time, for this body of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body at His appearing (Phil. iii, 20, 21). If He wills that any of His redeemed ones should continue a longer or shorter time in a frail, weak, suffering body, it must be in the light of the kingdom and the glory, the very best that His infinite love and wisdom could plan. "As for God, His way is perfect" (Ps. xviii, 30).

10, 11. "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." This was the main thing He sought to emphasize before them. Their bodies were in health, but their souls were sick, and He longed to save them, but they would not let Him. The power of the Lord was present to heal them, but they would not be healed. To speak if possible, more powerfully to them, He said to the sick man, "Arise and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house." We may imagine the palsied man so rejoicing in the forgiveness of his sins that perhaps he almost forgot that he was palsied.

12. "We never saw it on this fashion." As they saw the sick man arise in health, take up his bed and go forth before them all, with amazement, uttered these words. Both Matthew and Luke, as well as Mark, say that the people glorified God. Matthew adds, "Who had given such power unto men" (ix, 8). So, while one was healed in body and soul, and at least he and his friends had great joy and the confident expectation of the believing four was fully realized, these blind, self righteous doctors, and probably many others went away simply wondering.

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CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Topic For Week Beginning March 11—Comment by Rev. S. T. Doyle, Topic—Rejecting Christ—Mark iii, 1-9.

THE PARABLE.

The topic, rejecting Christ, is illustrated by Christ's parable of the wicked husbandmen. By this parable a certain man planted a vineyard, let it out to husbandmen and went into a far country, an incident of common occurrence. At proper times he sent his servants to the husbandmen for the fruit of the vineyard. But they shamefully treated them, beating them, wounding them and even killing some. At last he sent his only son, thinking they would reverence him, but instead they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." And they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard.

THE INTERPRETATION.

The owner of the vineyard is God. The vineyard is the Jewish church, the husbandmen the Jewish nation. The servants sent are the prophets whom God sent at different times to the Jews, whom they persecuted, abused and even killed. The only beloved Son is the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, whom the Jews rejected and crucified on the cross of Calvary. The judgment pronounced is the judgment that God has and will continue to bring upon the Jewish people for their rejection of Christ.

THE APPLICATION.

The explanation and application of this parable are easily made. There is nothing difficult to understand in the parable, nor is it hard to apply it to ourselves. The Jews were the chosen people of God. He selected them from the other nations of the world and made them His peculiar people. He gave them great opportunities, which brought with them great responsibilities. They did not measure up to their opportunities. They persecuted and even killed God's prophets, and when at last He even sent His Son to them they crucified Him, and God's judgment has rested upon the Jews ever since. Jerusalem was destroyed, and the gospel was sent to the gentiles. The rejected Christ was offered to the whole world. This includes us. Christ is now before us for our acceptance or rejection as He was once before the Jews. What will we do with Him? How the fate of the Jews should warn us against rejecting Christ! If God spared not His own people when they rejected His Son, much less will He spare us, who are not of the chosen family of Israel,

but by nature aliens and strangers to the covenants of promise.

To reject Christ is to stand in the light of our own best interests, to destroy all hope of the eternal salvation of our souls. It is to turn our backs upon our best friend and to trample underfoot the cross of Calvary—yes, even the Son of God Himself. Are we prepared to do that? Dare we do it, remembering that we will answer to God for it in the day of judgment?

THE PRAYER MEETING.

Make this meeting evangelistic in character. Give an opportunity to any who may be present, who have not done so, to accept Christ. Make a special effort to get the associate members to accept Christ and to confess Him publicly before the world.

Bible Readings.—Sam. viii, 1-7; Ps. ii, 1-12; cxviii, 22; Isa. liii, 1-3; Math. ii, 1-13; xxvii, 15-26; Mark v, 1-17; Luke iv, 16-31; xviii, 24, 25; Heb. ii, 1-3; x, 28, 29; xii, 23; Rev. xxi, 17.

Church Directory.

M. E. CHURCH.—W. C. Wilson, pastor. Services first and third Sundays at 11 a. m. and at 7:30 p. m. Prayer meeting Wednesday evening. Sunday-school at 9:30.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—I. H. Teel, pastor. Services second and fourth Sundays at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Sunday-school at 9:30. Prayer meeting, Wednesday evenings at 7:30.

M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH.—R. M. Wheat, pastor. Services first and third Sundays at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Sunday-school at 9:30. Prayer meeting, Tuesday evenings at 7:30 o'clock.

MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH.—Alex McChord, pastor. Services second Saturday night, Sunday and Sunday night. Sunday-school at 9:30. Prayer meeting, Monday evenings at 7:30 o'clock.

CATHOLIC CHURCH.—Rev. A. M. Coenen, pastor. First Mass, Sunday morning at 7 o'clock; Second Mass, 9:30 o'clock. Afternoon service at 2:30 every Sunday.

GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH.—William Childers, pastor. Services every third Sunday at 11 o'clock a. m. and at 7:30 p. m.

Y. P. S. C. E.—Prayer meeting every Sunday evening at 6:30.

Indictments at Hopkinsville.

Hopkinsville, Ky., March 5.—Of the forty-two indictments returned by the grand jury fourteen are for felony. John Robinson, who slew his brother, Prof. George Robinson, last November, was indicted for willful murder.

Our Colored Citizens.

All communications and notices of news pertaining to this column should be addressed to: GEO. ALEXANDER, Earlington, Ky.

John Porter visited in Evansville last Sunday.

There will be a grand entertainment by the members of the A. M. E. Zion Church Saturday night, March 10, 1900, at the colored Masonic Hall. Admission, 5c; lunch, 10c. Refreshments of all kinds, including ice cream. Don't miss this grand entertainment. The committee is composed of Mesdames Cassie Williams, Celia Dunlap and J. E. Todd, W. M. Hines, George Miller.

Mr. John Porter, one of the oldest barbers of Madisonville, died Friday night at his home and was buried Sunday. He leaves a wife and two children and a host of friends to mourn his death.

Wm. C. Orton spent several days with friends in the city, returning home Tuesday.

Miss E. H. Stockdale, of Louisville, is the guest of Mrs. P. A. Cavanaugh.

The memorial exercises of Washington and Lincoln's birthday at the Public school were very interesting. The drawing committee did good work. The portraits of Washington, Lincoln, Franklin, Harriet Beecher Stowe, U. S. Grant, Liberty Bell, Statue of Liberty were drawn in colored crayon on the blackboard. The drawing committee was composed of Willie Hargroves, Euweli Simms, Mary Hert, Myrtle Hayes, Eliza Amos, Myrtle Hert, Lillie Fitzpatrick. All the grades did well, especially the First and Second.

MORTON'S GAP.

Mrs. Dora Grace, of this place, died February 25, and was buried the 27th. The funeral was conducted by Revs. J. C. Morton and M. Dickson.

Rev. Dickson filled his regular appointment at the Baptist church Sunday and Sunday night.

Tony Rasco, of Earlington, visited his brother, Willis Rasco, Sunday.

Miss Myrt Slaton, who has been

visiting Mrs. Fanny Roles, returned home Sunday.

Miss Lonie Petty, of Hecla, is visiting friends here this week.

Rev. J. H. Johnson, spent a few days with his brother, William Johnson, this week.

Mrs. Mattie Rasco went to Earlington, this week.

Arthur Boddy was in the city this week.

Mrs. Maggie Hall, Lucy Green, Lela Townsel, Lily Wing and Lou Emma Watson went to Madisonville Saturday.

Miss Blanche Johnson and little Toy Johnson visited Mrs. Patterson last week.

Mrs. Mattie Green went to Madisonville Saturday.

B. F. Sharber went to Madisonville Saturday.

Mr. Dickson, wife and children, returned from Hopkinsville Saturday.

L. Johnson is slowly improving.

There will be a grand rally at the Forest Baptist church, April 15th.

I. Grace is visiting his son this week.

ST. CHARLES.

Mr. and Mrs. Anybody, can you guess why Henry Latham has been all smiles since the third of this month? It is a boy.

We are glad to see Chatter Cunningham up again.

Suppose we all get the beam out of our own eyes, then we can see clearly to get the mote out of our brother's eyes. A hint to the wise is sufficient.

Rev. John Martin filled his regular appointment here at the A. M. E. Zion Church. His subject was "Christ, the Son of God."

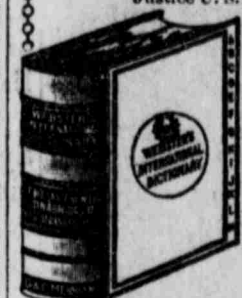
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